

NOT JUST ANOTHER LITTLE FERRIE

by Assassination Information Bureau

There can be no doubt that Jim Garrison was on to something in New Orleans. He conclusively demonstrated that Oswald's Fair Play for Cuba Committee was phony, possibly a provocateur foil for rightist anti-Castroites. He produced eight strong witnesses who, in late August, 1963, had observed Clay Shaw and David Ferrie on a bizarre mission to register their companion, Lee Harvey Oswald, to vote in rural Clinton, Louisiana. Even in his failure to convict Clay Shaw of conspiring to kill John F. Kennedy, Garrison succeeded in uncovering a frightening hornet's nest of busy conspirators and secret projects.

But Garrison's star has faded in recent years. He was defeated as District Attorney and lost a bid for a Louisiana Supreme Court judgeship. He has been a recluse throughout the current revival of interest in the assassination, and many prominent conspiracy crusaders recoil from Garrison's findings, preferring to rest their case for a new investigation on the safe territory of bullet angles and suppressed evidence.

In his attempt to find out what Lee Oswald was doing in New Orleans in the summer of 1963, Garrison saw further into the heart of the beast than all the congressional committees put together. As the controversy over what happened in Dallas becomes increasingly clouded with allegations that Castro may have done it in retaliation for CIA attempts on his life, Garrison's revelations offer the best rebuttal.

Oswald's bogus pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee is the pivotal point in Garrison's investigation, and the source of his cryptic statement to the press that "the key to the whole case is through the looking glass. Black is white and white is black." The New Orleans FPCC had one member: Oswald. Its headquarters were apparently at the office of private detective Guy Bannister, a former FBI agent and founder of the anti-Castro Friends of Democratic Cuba.

Bannister's office was a clearing house for right-wing activity. Munitions were stored there for shipment to anti-Castro guerrillas. A probe disclosed that this modest gumshoe kept files entitled *CIA, Anti-Soviet Underground, B-70 Bomber Force, JFK's Civil Rights Program, Dismantling of Ballistic Missile Systems*, and more. After Bannister's death by a heart attack in 1964, the FBI carted the files away.

David Ferrie spent a lot of time around Bannister's office in the summer of '63.



This historic photo has been published only once before, during the heyday of the Jim Garrison investigation, in a sporadically-produced right-wing journal called the Shreveport (La.) Councillor. It shows getaway-plane pilot David Ferrie (left) unquestionably in the presence of Garrison indicted co-conspirator Clay Shaw at a testimonial dinner some time in 1959. At his trial, Shaw said: "I never met Ferrie." Later, Garrison unsuccessfully brought perjury charges against him.

A friend of Oswald, Ferrie had come to the attention of even the FBI when he made a strange trip to Texas on the evening of Nov. 22 for the alleged purpose of indoor ice skating and hunting. A former Eastern Airlines pilot and Bay of Pigs veteran, Ferrie was the initial focal point of Garrison's investigation. He once had said publicly that Kennedy should be shot for his betrayal of free Cuba. On February 22, 1967, four days after the investigation was made public, Ferrie was found dead at age 49 of a blood clot in the brain.

Ferrie claimed that at the time of the assassination, he was in New Orleans, gainfully employed as an investigator for Carlos Marcello, working on a case related to the "Little Man's" 1954 deportation for organized crime activities. This connection was important because it caused an examination of how the nefarious web of Cuban exiles, CIA and organized crime, woven out of a common desire to overthrow Castro, could just as easily prey on domestic targets. After the Bay of Pigs, the exile groups, angered by Kennedy's lack of commitment to invade Cuba, sought covert rather than government support for their guerilla activities. They raised private (CIA fronts' and crime) funds to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Secret raids were launched against Cuba. Attempts were

made to assassinate Castro. But they failed, and the Kennedy administration began to crack down on these groups. In the summer of '63, the FBI and local police busted several training grounds in Louisiana and Florida.

Garrison obtained a memo from the Miami Police infiltration of Cuban exile groups, dated April 4, 1963, which reported "that all violence hitherto directed toward Castro's Cuba will now be directed towards various governmental agencies in the United States."

It is unclear exactly how Clay Shaw fit into this. He was an operative for the CIA, an associate of Oswald and Ferrie. In his position as director of New Orleans' International Trade Mart, he may have been familiar with the swirl of secret activity which culminated in the Dallas assassination. But Garrison certainly failed to convince the jury of this in March, 1969.

Yet the obstacles to trying what was essentially an espionage case in 1969 were monumental: The National Archives refused to turn over evidence; key witnesses fled, and Governors Reagan, Connally and Rhodes refused to extradite them back to New Orleans. The FBI intimidated other witnesses. If a man can be judged by the enemies he makes, surely such opposition speaks well for Garrison.

DEC. 1975
CRAWDADDY